

B-4443

ST. PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

The centerpiece of this Roman Catholic campus is the 1888 (with earlier core) freestanding red-brick church. It has Italian Gothic and Romanesque elements, with some Ruskinian influence in the details. Much of the church's character is derived from a 1905 remodeling, where two side aisles were added and the sanctuary extended with larger sacristies. There is also a historic parochial school, parish hall (which was originally built as a church and has suffered a fire), a rectory, and a convent. Access is restricted to when church is open.

ND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM
SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church

other names/site number St. Peter Claver Church/ B-4443

2. Location

street & number 1524 N. Fremont Ave. not for publication

city or town Baltimore vicinity N/A
state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510
zip code 21217

3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A

4. National Park Service Certification N/A

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
5	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
5	Total

SDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
(St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church)
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4443
(Page 2)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION

Sub: religious facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: RELIGION

Sub: religious facility

church school

church-related residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic

Romanesque

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

roof

walls BRICK

other marble

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance See continuation sheet.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Religion

Community Planning and Development

Ethnic Heritage

ISDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
(St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church)
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4443

(Page 3)

Period of Significance c. 1870-1940

Significant Dates c. 1870
1888
1905

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Maps

Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896.
Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877.
Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2,3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928.
Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852.

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Lot = 68' x 120'

ISDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
(St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church)
(Baltimore City, MD)

B-4443
(Page 4)

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—

— See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Block 306, Lot 7

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) which retains its original property lines.

1. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architectural Historians
organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992
street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone (202) 234-2333
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20009

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name St. Peter Claver's Church
street&number 1524 N. Fremont telephone
city or town Baltimore state MD zip code 21217

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape
Architecture, and Community Planning; Religion;
Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): religion

Known Design Source: none

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

The Church

The church is the centerpiece of a Roman Catholic campus containing: 1) the church (pre-1876, 1888, 1905), 2) a parish hall (1884, 1967) and 3) St. Charles Hall Lower School (1885-1890), 4) the rectory (1929), and 5) a convent (date unknown).

The freestanding church of 1888 sits at a prominent intersection and is an important neighborhood fixture. It has Italian Gothic and Romanesque elements, with some Ruskinian influence in the details. Much of the church's character is derived from a 1905 remodelling, where two side aisles were added and the sanctuary extended with larger sacristies. The three-bay facade is formed of two two-story side towers and a central tower of three stories, all with tiled, hipped roofs; the central tower is based on an Italian campanile.

The three entrances have pointed-arch openings with polychromed brick voussours, and molded brick pediments above. The larger center entrance has a pedimented hood supported by stone columns with carved medieval capitals. The side towers have triple round-arched windows in the second story. The central tower has, in each elevation of its third, belfry story, paired round-arched windows with an oculus above, intersected at the springing level by a stone beltcourse.

The original door has been filled in with small-paned stained glass. The entrance today is through two paired doors--probably part of the 1905 remodelling--located to either side of the central entryway. In 1966, the church underwent another renovation, which consisted of both interior and exterior changes.

An extensive renovation in the late 1940s saw the addition of new Italian altars. Walls, ceilings, and statues were repainted, and a false ceiling and other changes were made to the parish hall.

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church was named in 1960 as the pilot training center for recently ordained Josephites. Clergy and congregation were active in the civil rights movement, picketing local segregated businesses and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

marching in support of many civil rights events.

A major church renovation in 1966 reflected the liturgical changes resulting from the Vatican II council. The parish hall was almost destroyed by arson in August of 1967; greatly altered in its 1968 rebuilding, this structure now serves as the auditorium.

The Auditorium

This building was originally built as a sanctuary for the Sharon Baptist Church. During World War I, it was purchased by St. Peter Claver Church to serve as the parish's auditorium. The building suffered from an extensive fire in 1967, and lost its tower and most of its structure. What remains today is a rebuilding of a fragment, and represents only the easternmost portion of the original structure.

What remains of the original 1884 church is a two-story high, nine-bays wide section of the building, covered by a single broad front-facing gable. The structure contains a wide variety of window types and decorative details.

The entrance is set in the left corner, and has a very simple classical surround of molded brick, a stone lintel, and one brick pilaster on the corner pier banded in stone. Adjacent to the corner entrance are two groups of three windows, double-hung with one-over-one sash, in flat-arched openings with stone sills. To their right are two small, narrow, vertical casement windows with multiple panes; they are set at staggered levels, and probably light a staircase.

Above them is an arched opening, now boarded over, that has a stone panel, below which is a relief carving of rosettes and a swag. The window arch is intersected by a brick beltcourse, which extends across only about one-third of the facade. A similar beltcourse crosses the gable, intersecting a large arched opening that is filled with brick and contains a small ventilator panel. This opening has a molded brick sill and a raised, scrolled brick panel below. There are exposed tie-rod ends with decorative rosettes in the second beltcourse and below the gable window.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

The School

The school, though not surveyed for this project, is located to the rear of the church, and is most visible from Carey Street. It is a brick building with a slightly rounded apse and horizontal brick banding. Much of the brickwork appears to have been poorly repointed.

The Rectory

The adjacent freestanding rectory at 1524 North Fremont, immediately to the north of the church, dates to 1929. It has a slightly gabled facade, is three-stories high and five-bays wide, and stands on a basement defined by a soldier-course watertable.

The first- and second-floors of the rectory have flat-headed openings with stone sills; those on the third floor are arched, and the central entrance has a segmental head, and a double-leaf door with transom. Windows contain four-over-four double-hung sash. A small, plain stone medallion is set within the gable. The cornice is quite simple, formed of soldier-course brick capped by a stone coping. A small cross crowns the gable's low peak.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

SIGNIFICANCE

African-American catholicism in the United States began in Baltimore. The parish of St. Peter Claver, dedicated in 1888, was the third African-American parish established in the city, and was established to serve the citizens of West Baltimore. By the 1960s, it had become the largest African-American Catholic congregation in Baltimore.

St. Peter Claver, named after the patron saint of the slaves, is the first mission of the Society of St. Joseph. The Society founded the parish as a training center for seminarians and newly-ordained priests. The American branch of the Society is today an interracial group of several hundred priests and brothers "who staff five Baltimore parishes and assist in others."¹

The history of African-American Catholicism began in the late eighteenth century, with St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore providing a center of worship for refugees from San Domingo by 1798. Instruction proved difficult because of the poor general education African-Americans received. This situation troubled Father James Nicholas Joubert, and in 1827 he founded a school for African-Americans, with the help of three women from the West Indies. In June 1929, these women and a fourth woman formed the Oblate Sisters of Providence, "the first Order of African-American Sisters in the United States."²

The Order built a chapel on Richmond Street. The African-American congregation, which had previously worshipped at the Chapelle Basse at St. Mary's Seminary, moved there also. Its membership continued to grow until,

¹ George Hanst, "St. Peter Claver Church Faces More Problems Than Ever Before" (Baltimore Evening Sun 2 October 1928, Enoch Pratt Free Library vertical file) np.

² Reverend Joseph V. Tyson, S.S.J., ed., "What We've Heard---What We've Seen": St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church Centennial Journal (Baltimore 1988) 15.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

in 1857, they were given the basement of the St. Ignatius church. They named this "The Chapel of Blessed Peter Claver." Under the leadership of Jesuit priests, funds were raised for the construction of a permanent church building for African-American Catholics. Eventually a historic building located on the corner of Calvert and Pleasant Streets was purchased and dedicated as the Church of St. Francis Xavier on February 21, 1864. This was the first African-American Catholic church in the United States.³

Maryland, though a slave-holding state, had a large population of free African-Americans.⁴ The Maryland legislature ended slavery in the state in 1864; this occasioned a reexamination by the Church of its responsibility towards its African-American constituents and possible converts. The creation of a special apostolate dedicated to African-American parishioners was discussed, though little was done until 1871, when a number of English missionaries, trained in Mill Hill, England expressly to serve foreign missions, arrived in the United States.⁵ These men initially worked with the parish of St. Francis Xavier in East Baltimore. A second mission for African-American Catholics, St. Monica's Parish, was established in Baltimore in 1882.⁶ Several of the Mill Hill missionary priests established the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart, known as the Josephites.⁷

Segregation caused many hardships in African-American Catholic worship.

³ Centennial Journal 16-17.

⁴ The earliest independent community of free African-Americans in the country was probably either "Big Woods" in Montgomery County, Maryland, which may have been founded as early as 1813, or the African-American neighborhood in the Quaker community of Sandy Spring, also in Montgomery County, Maryland; this African-American community was established in 1815.

⁵ Centennial Journal 16-17.

⁶ Centennial Journal 16-17.

⁷ Centennial Journal 23.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

Though it is estimated that 35,000 African-American Catholics were living in Baltimore in 1888, there was no African-American Catholic church in West Baltimore. Many people had to walk a long distance to East Baltimore to attend St. Francis Xavier, and many had to attend largely white Catholic churches, where they were forced to sit in segregated pews at the rear of the church or in balconies.⁸

St. Joseph Seminary opened in 1888 on Pennsylvania Avenue, just south of the current St. Peter Claver Church. The seminary's aim was to train men for the African-American missions. With their guidance, the third parish for African-American Catholics in Baltimore, St. Peter Claver Church, was established farther up the street in a former church near the intersection of Fremont and Pennsylvania.⁹ The church building was purchased at a cost of several thousand dollars, along with an adjoining lot and house, which would become the first rectory. The Mill Hill Fathers added a sanctuary and two side sacristies to the original church.¹⁰ St. Peter Claver Church was dedicated soon after the canonization of the seventeenth-century Spaniard, known as "The Apostle of Slaves."¹¹

On dedication day, September 9, 1888, the Feast day of St. Peter Claver, over

⁸ Centennial Journal 17-18.

⁹ Centennial Journal 18. There is some confusion here as to who occupied the building prior to St. Peter's purchase. The information in the Centennial Journal does not match that indicated by historical maps. According to historical maps, the church constructed prior to 1876 was first occupied by St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church. The 1885 Bromley Atlas shows the building, but no owner, likely indicating that it was vacant at that time. The 1890 map shows St. Peter Claver in an enlarged structure on the same site.

¹⁰ Centennial Journal 19.

¹¹ Archbishop William D. Borders, D.D., letter to St. Peter Claver Parish (Centennial Journal, May 1988) 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

1000 people, including representatives of numerous Catholic societies, marched to the new building. A few weeks later a school was opened in the church basement. A new school building was constructed in 1891, under the charge of the Sisters of St. Francis of Glen Riddle, who still run the school today.¹²

The church was completely rebuilt in 1905; two side aisles and two larger sacristies were added and the sanctuary extended. The building which had been used as a parish hall was purchased during WWI when its owner, Sharon Baptist Church, moved to Stricker Street. The house beside the old rectory was razed, and a third lot and house north of the church was bought, that house razed, and the new rectory built on the cleared site. The new rectory was dedicated in May 1929. The congregation of St. Peter Claver grew steadily, numbering over 5000 members by 1940. Continuing their mission to the African-American apostolate, the Josephites have continued to provide many pastors and other clergy to St. Peter Claver.¹³

¹² Very Reverend Eugene P. McManus, S.S. J., Superior General, Hosephite Priests & Brothers, letter to St. Peter Claver Parish (Centennial Journal, 29 June 1988) 2; Centennial Journal 5.

¹³ Centennial Journal 25ff.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and state

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, John J., S.S.J. "Can We Save the Negroes of the South?" Extension
(September 1901): 9+.

Tyson, Reverend Joseph V., S.S.J., ed. "What We've Heard--What We've Seen:"
St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church Centennial Journal (Baltimore): 1988.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, vertical file, St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church.

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4443

Neg. No. 6/2

Historic Name St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
Current Name/Use St. Peter Claver Church
Address(es) 1524 North Fremont Avenue

Resource/Property Type
☐ Rowhouses
☐ Commercial Structure
☒ Public/Institutional Building
☐ Public Housing
☐ Site
☐ Other

☐ Attached
☒ Freestanding

Note: _____

Stories 2 + tower

Primary Material brick Secondary Material stone

Roof Form gabled? hip roofs on towers

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 3 If Rowhouse: ☐ Flat Front ☐ Swell Front ☐ Porch

Window Type: ☐ Double-Hung
☐ 1/1 Sash
☐ 2/2 Sash
☐ 2/1 Sash
☐ Other Sash
☐ Transom

Door Type: ☐ Single-Leaf
☐ Double-Leaf
☐ Number of panels (if visible)
☐ Transom

Architectural Style Gothic Revival Date c. 1888; altered 1905

Noteworthy Features: Church with Italian Gothic and Romanesque details, some Ruskinian influence. Much of structure's character derived from 1905 alterations. Central tower modelled on Italian campanile. Modillioned and denticulated cornices. Three entrances with arched transoms, polychromed stone voussoirs, molded brick pediments above; larger entrance in center, with pedimented hood supported by stone columns. Arched double and triple windows. Cross finials.

Alterations: ☐ Formstone ☐ Stucco
☐ Vinyl/Aluminum ☒ Window/Door Changes
☐ Awnings ☐ Missing Cornice Elements
☐ First-Floor Use Change ☐ Other: _____

Status: ☒ Occupied ☐ Vacant ☐ Mixed
NR Evaluation: ☒ Contributing ☐ Non-Contributing
Recommended for Intensive Level: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl Affiliation: Robinson & Associates
Date: February-April 1992

SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH
RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM

Survey No. B-4434 B-4443

Neg. No. 6/2

Historic Name St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church

Current Name/Use St. Peter Claver Church Rectory

Address(es) 1500 Block, North Fremont Avenue

Resource/Property Type

☐ Rowhouses
☐ Commercial Structure
☒ Public/Institutional Building
☐ Public Housing
☐ Site
☐ Other

☐ Attached

☒ Freestanding

Note: _____

Stories 3 + B

Primary Material brick Secondary Material stone (marble?)

Roof Form gable

No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 5 If Rowhouse: ☐ Flat Front ☐ Swell Front ☐ Porch

Window Type: ☒ Double-Hung

☐ 1/1 Sash

☐ 2/2 Sash

☐ 2/1 Sash

☒ Other Sash

☐ Transom

Door Type: ☐ Single-Leaf

☒ Double-Leaf

4 Number of panels (if visible)

☒ Transom

Architectural Style Renaissance Revival Date c. post-1914

Noteworthy Features: Simple front gable with molded brick and stone cornice, capped by cross finial. Stone medallion inset in gable. Flat-arched windows with stone sills, arched windows on third floor; segmental transom above central entrance.

Alterations:

☐ Formstone

☐ Vinyl/Aluminum

☐ Awnings

☐ First-Floor Use Change

☐ Stucco

☐ Window/Door Changes

☐ Missing Cornice Elements

☐ Other: _____

Status: ☒ Occupied ☐ Vacant ☐ Mixed

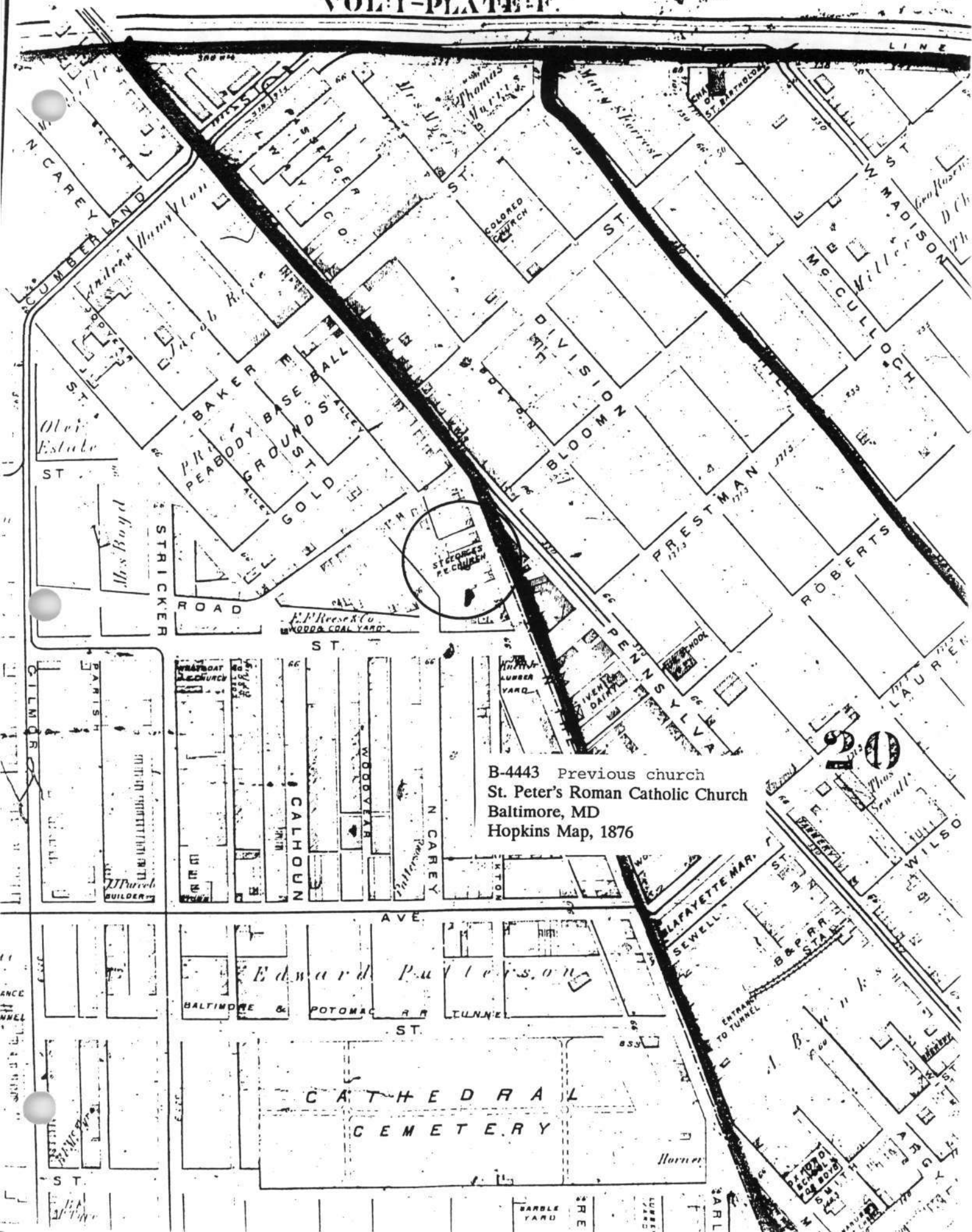
NR Evaluation: ☒ Contributing ☐ Non-Contributing

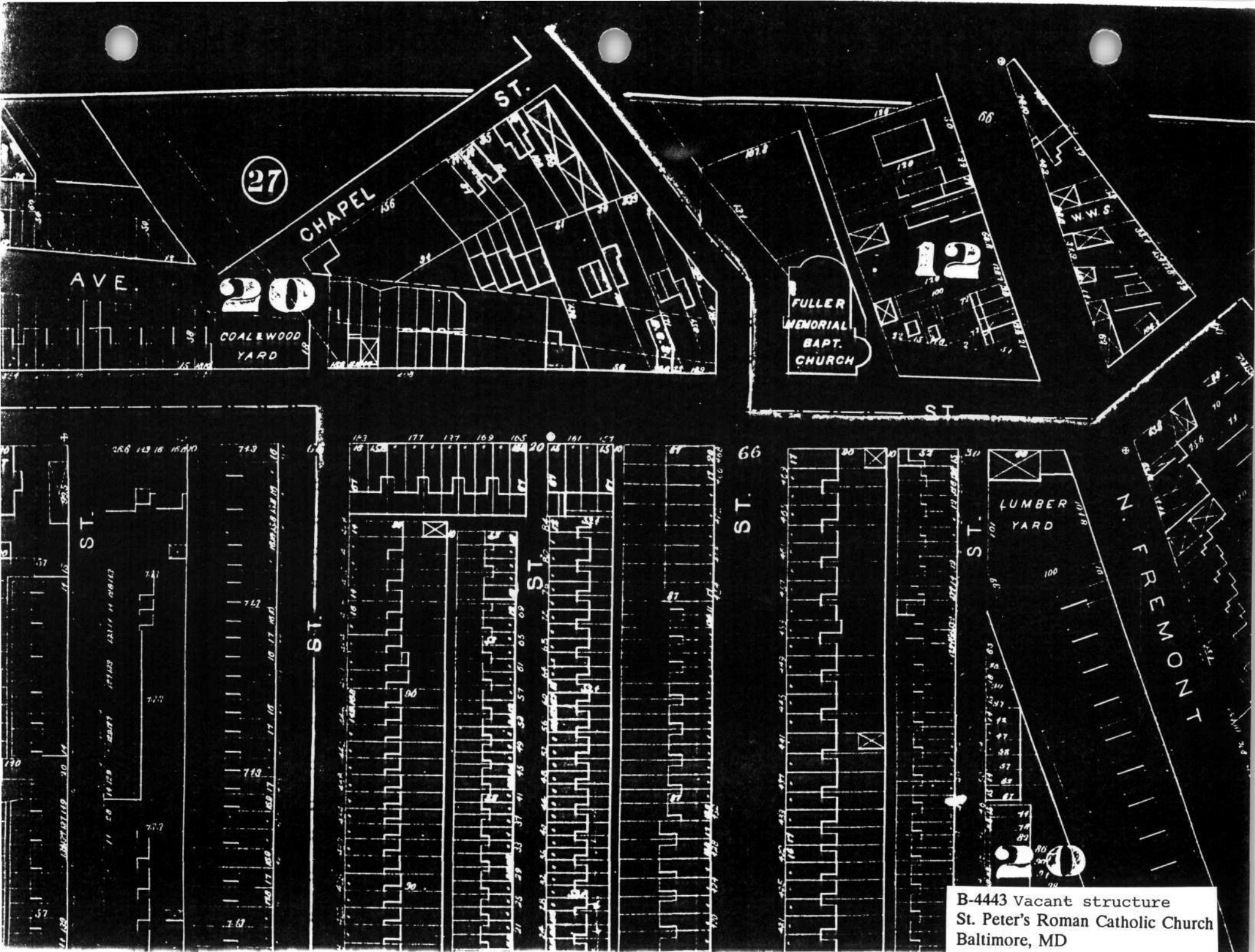
Recommended for Intensive Level: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Surveyor: Joey Lampl

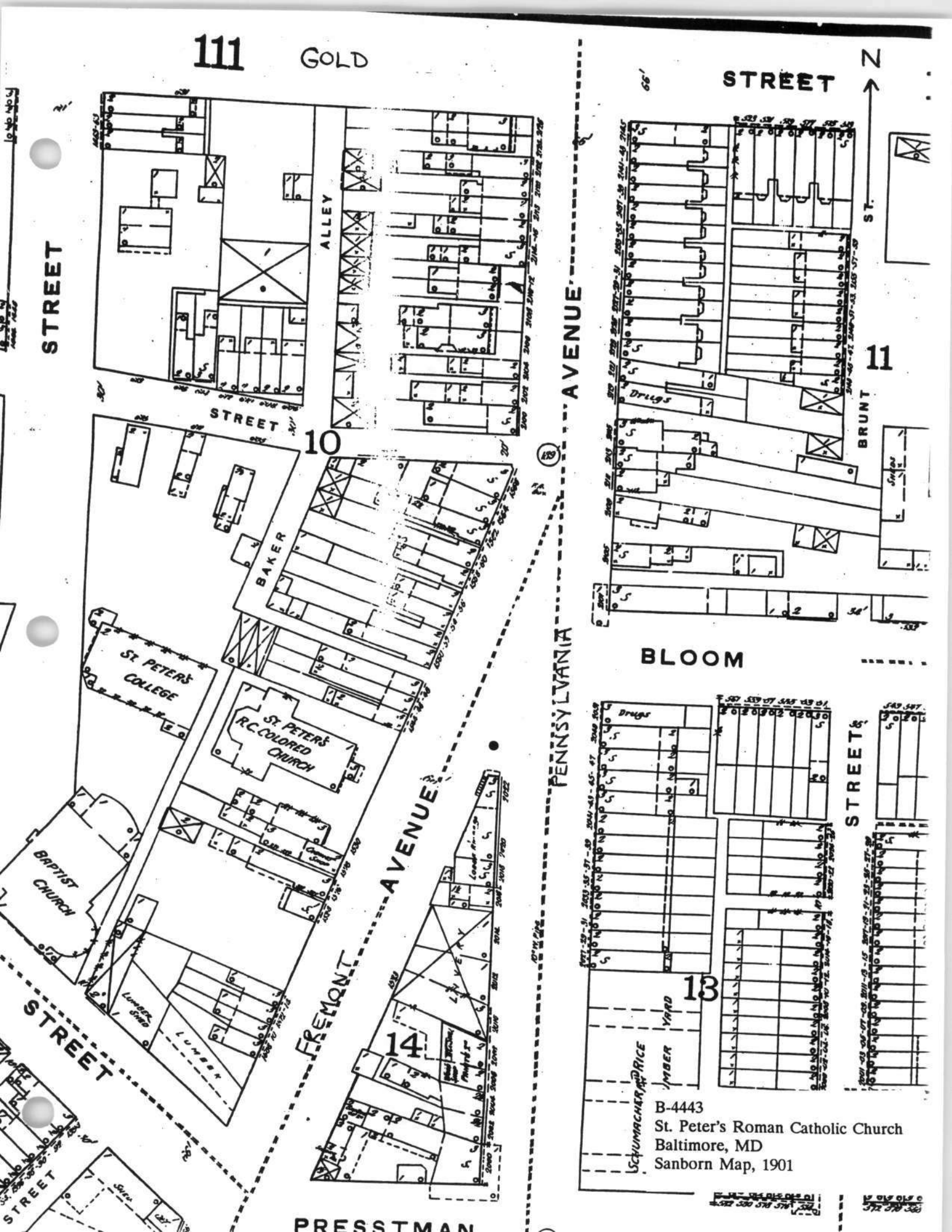
Affiliation: Robinson & Associates

Date: February-April 1992





B-4443 Vacant structure
St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
Baltimore, MD



111 GOLD

STREET

ALLEY

STREET

10

BAKER

ST. PETER'S
COLLEGE

ST. PETER'S
R.C. COLORED
CHURCH

BAPTIST
CHURCH

STREET

AVENUE

FREMONT

14

PENNSYLVANIA

AVENUE

STREET

N
ST.

11

BRUNT

BLOOM

STREET

13

SCHUMACHER & RICE

B-4443
St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
Baltimore, MD
Sanborn Map, 1901

PRESSTMAN



B-4443
St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore West Quadrangle



SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN - NORTH

#B - 4443

BALTIMORE, MD

ELIZABETH GO LAMPL

MARCH 1992

CITY OF BALTIMORE, COMMISSION OF HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

HISTORIC: ST. PETER'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

CURRENT: ST. PETER CLAVER'S CHURCH (center of group) and RECTORY
(at right)

1524, N. FREMONT AVE.

EAST ELEVATIONS

ROLL 6/NEG 2

1 OF 4



Sandtown - Winchester / Penn - North
#B-4443
Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson

July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical
and Architectural Preservation

Historic : St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church
AND RECTORY

Current : St. Peter Claver Church

1524 N. Freemont Avenue

VIEW FACING NORTH

2 of 4

Roll 10/neg 8



Sandtown - Winchester / Penn-North

B-4443

Baltimore, MD

Leonard Jackson

July 1992

City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical and Architectural
preservation

Historic : St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church (CONVENT TO LEFT;
RECTORY TO RIGHT)

Current : St. Peter Claver Church

1524 N. Freemont Avenue

VIEW FACING NORTHWEST

3 of 4

Roll 10/neg 9



SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN - NORTH

#B-4443

BALTIMORE, MD.

ELIZABETH Q. LAMPL

MARCH 1992

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION (CITY OF BALTIMORE)

HISTORIC: BAPTIST CHURCH; SHARON BAPTIST CHURCH. 1884.

CURRENT: ST. PETER CLAVER AUDITORIUM

CORNER, PRESSMAN & CAREY STREETS

SOUTH ELEVATION

ROLL 5 / NEG 3

4 of 4